

AmeriCorps VISTA

Request for Concept Papers

February 27, 2025



This webinar is produced and published at US taxpayer expense.



Session Outcomes

- Describe what AmeriCorps VISTA is and identify what members can and can't do for your organization.
- Learn how to apply and connect with AmeriCorps staff and resources.
- Review the Concept Paper submission process.



What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

Fighting Poverty

Empowering Low- Income
Communities

Building Capacity for Communities
and Organizations

Creating Sustainable Solutions

Key Terms

**AmeriCorps
VISTA Project**

Project Sponsor

Project Director

Supervisor

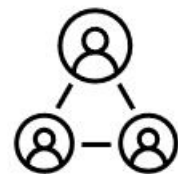
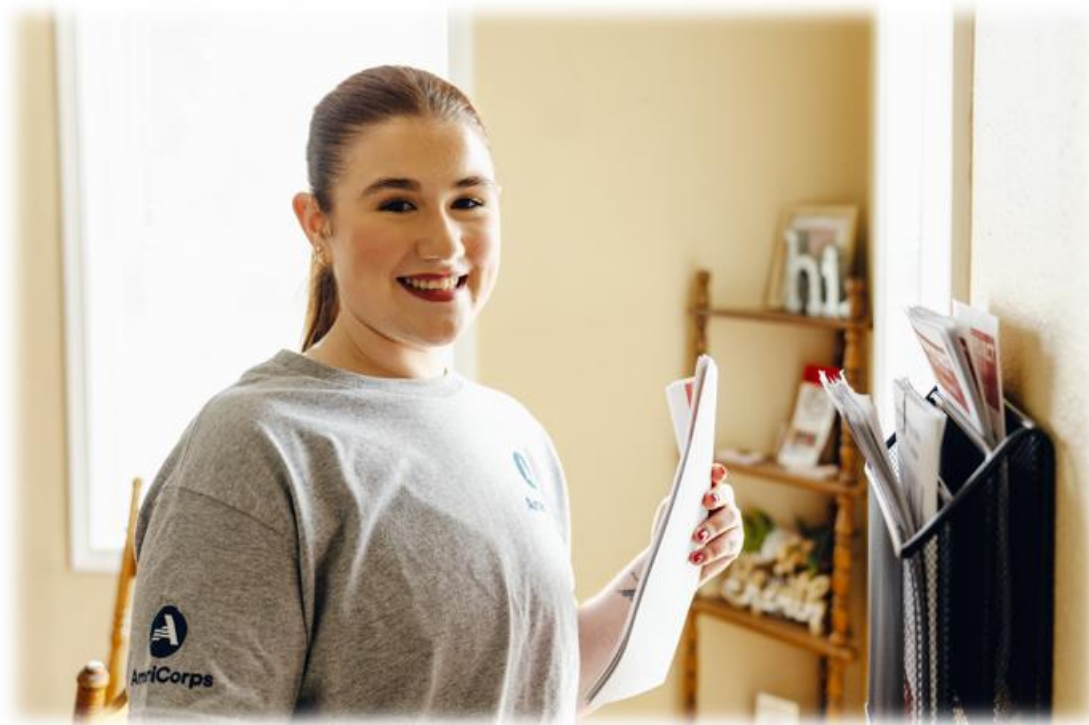
**AmeriCorps
Regional Office**

Member

Leader

Summer Associate

2024 AmeriCorps VISTA Impact



2.3M+ youth receiving services



46K+ individuals supported in substance abuse programming

Align9

This project utilizes 6 members to increase the capacity of rural and small-town communities in eastern Tennessee and in the Louisville, Kentucky, area to fight the opioid crisis.

- 4 members in TN and 2 members in KY develop community partnerships, design marketing and communications materials, build volunteer systems, conduct outreach, and improve data tracking and analysis systems.
- In FY24, members generated \$16,500 in cash resources and \$17,500 in in-kind resources and engaged 20 volunteers in 1,200 hours of service.



Idaho Department of Correction



MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH AMERICORPS VISTA
Build your resume, gain skills, kickstart your career.

AmeriCorps.gov/VISTA



This project utilizes approximately 12 members to increase the capacity of the Idaho Department of Corrections mentoring program that serve incarcerated individuals who are experiencing high recidivism rates. The program has an emphasis on economic opportunity. In the past year, members have:

- Increased the number of volunteer mentors statewide from 380 to over 1000.
- Connected over 500 mentor and mentee relationships.
- Recruited and managed 1000 volunteers.
- Developed partnerships, tracking systems, educational opportunities and more.

AmeriCorps VISTA Project Sponsors

Eligible Entities

- The following types of entities are eligible to apply to be an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsor and thereby undertake projects in the U.S. and certain U.S. territories: (per 45 CFR § 2556.100):
 - Public or private nonprofit organizations
 - Tribal government or tribal government agencies
 - State and local government or agencies



AmeriCorps VISTA Project Models

Sponsoring Organization

Sponsoring Organization



Single-Site



Intermediary



VISTA



VISTA



Supervisor



Supervisor



Supervisor



Single Site Model

- Supervisor
- Member(s)

Intermediary Model

- Sites can be located in the same state and may include sites in another state(s)
- Site supervisors
- AmeriCorps VISTA Memebbers

Capacity Building

vs

Direct Service



Capacity Building

Tasks and activities to expand the scale, reach, efficiency or effectiveness of specific antipoverty projects

Direct Service

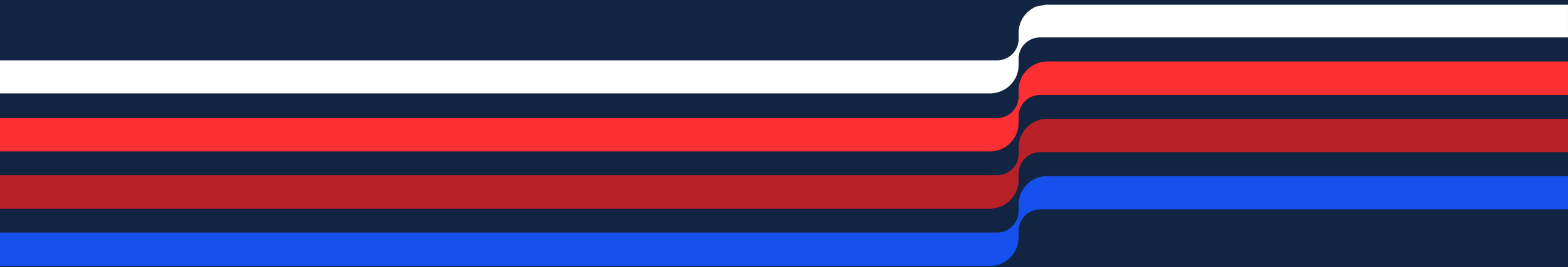
Providing services to the identified project recipients or clients of a project

Sponsor Responsibilities: Member Management

- Recruit and place members
- Provide workspace, equipment and supplies
- Professional development and on-site orientation & training
- Assist members with community entry
- Member supervision and performance appraisals
- Sponsor Verification Form



AmeriCorps VISTA Members



The Basics



- 18+ years of age
- U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents
- Must pass a national service criminal history check
- May have specific knowledge skills, or abilities required by the sponsoring organization
- Local or national recruits

Leaders



- Projects with six or more members may have a Leader assigned to support the members
- Leaders guide data collection & interpret data (they do not perform the reporting)
- Coordinate, facilitate, and support the efforts of members (do not supervise)

What do members serving in a VISTA project do?

Create Powerful Partnerships with businesses, community leaders, and other stakeholders

Expand current programs in demographic, geographic, and/or programmatic scope

Build volunteer management, leadership and training systems

Leverage both cash and in-kind resources by building development systems

What can AmeriCorps VISTA Members NOT Do?

- International Work
 - Religious Activity
 - Prohibited Political Activity
 - Hatch Act
 - Voter Registration
 - Union Organizing
 - Supplanting staff or existing volunteers
- 

Benefits for AmeriCorps VISTA Members



**Living
Allowance**



**End of Service
Award**



**Employers of
National
Service**



**Health
Benefit**



**Professional
Development**



**Non-
competitive
Eligibility**

Session Outcomes

- Describe what AmeriCorps VISTA is and identify what members can and can't do for your organization
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- Review the Concept Paper submission process



Beginning the Project Application Process



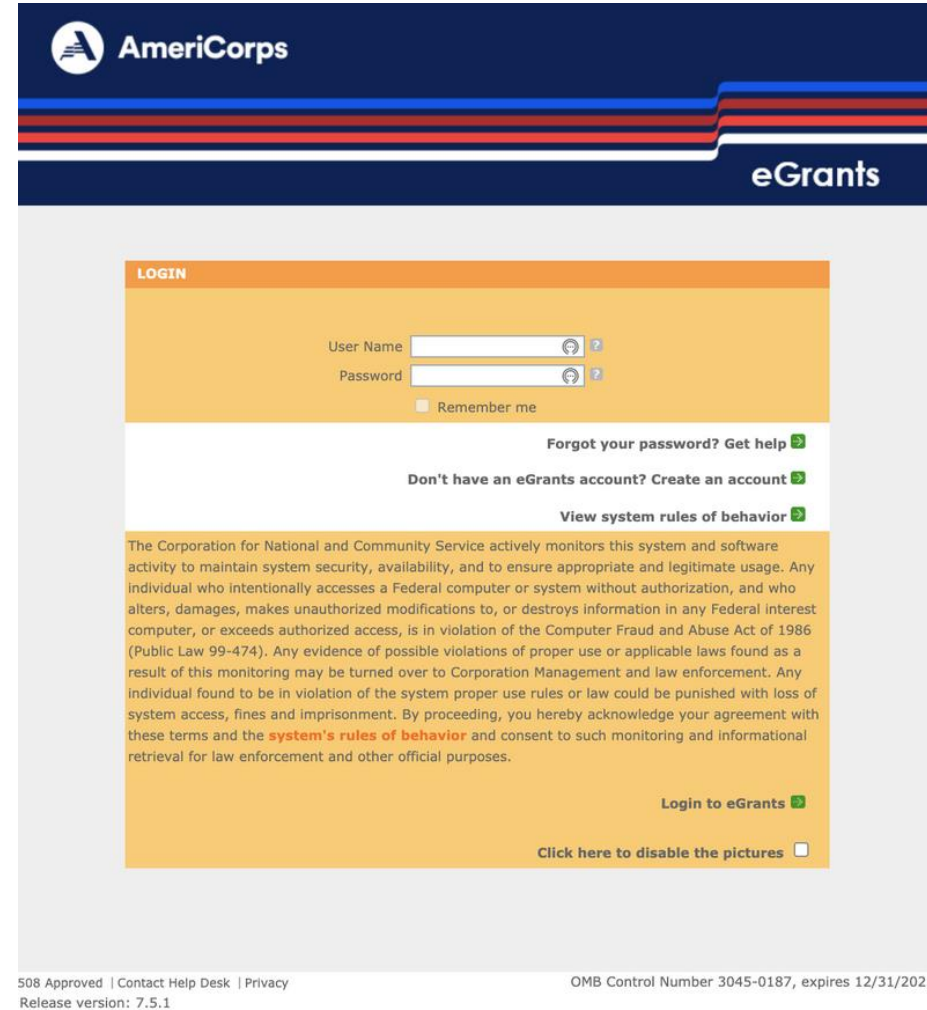
VISTA Application Process

1 AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper

Organizations submit an AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper. The Concept Paper is a preliminary screening tool used to evaluate whether the organization would be an appropriate sponsor.

2 AmeriCorps VISTA Project Application

If AmeriCorps approves the Concept Paper, the organization submits an AmeriCorps VISTA Project Application based on the approved Concept Paper.



The screenshot shows the AmeriCorps eGrants login interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the AmeriCorps logo on the left and the word "eGrants" on the right. Below the header is a white box containing the login form. The form has an orange "LOGIN" header. It includes fields for "User Name" and "Password", each with a help icon. There is a "Remember me" checkbox. Below the fields are links for "Forgot your password? Get help", "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account", and "View system rules of behavior". A paragraph of text explains the system's monitoring policy. At the bottom of the form are links for "Login to eGrants" and "Click here to disable the pictures". The footer of the page contains the text "508 Approved | Contact Help Desk | Privacy Release version: 7.5.1" on the left and "OMB Control Number 3045-0187, expires 12/31/2021" on the right.

LOGIN

User Name

Password

☐ Remember me

[Forgot your password? Get help](#)

[Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account](#)

[View system rules of behavior](#)

The Corporation for National and Community Service actively monitors this system and software activity to maintain system security, availability, and to ensure appropriate and legitimate usage. Any individual who intentionally accesses a Federal computer or system without authorization, and who alters, damages, makes unauthorized modifications to, or destroys information in any Federal interest computer, or exceeds authorized access, is in violation of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-474). Any evidence of possible violations of proper use or applicable laws found as a result of this monitoring may be turned over to Corporation Management and law enforcement. Any individual found to be in violation of the system proper use rules or law could be punished with loss of system access, fines and imprisonment. By proceeding, you hereby acknowledge your agreement with these terms and the **system's rules of behavior** and consent to such monitoring and informational retrieval for law enforcement and other official purposes.

[Login to eGrants](#)

[Click here to disable the pictures](#)

508 Approved | Contact Help Desk | Privacy
Release version: 7.5.1

OMB Control Number 3045-0187, expires 12/31/2021



AmeriCorps VISTA

CONCEPT PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

OMB Control #: 3045-0038
Expiration Date: 03/31/2027

Characteristics of a Strong Concept Paper

- Aligns with AmeriCorps focus areas/VISTA programming priorities
- Addresses the needs of a low-income community
- Involves the community in project development and implementation
- Leads to organizational capacity and sustainability
- Generates public or private sector resources
- Promotes local volunteer service
- Be specific



AmeriCorps

**AMERICORPS VISTA ANNUAL
PROGRAM GUIDANCE FOR
CURRENT AND POTENTIAL
SPONSORS**

Fiscal Year 2025
October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025

**What Types of
Programming
Does
AmeriCorps
VISTA Support?**

Focus Areas & Current Programming Priorities



Economic Opportunity

- Housing
- Employment/
Workforce
Development

Focus Areas & Current Programming Priorities



Veterans & Military Families

- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Healthy Futures



Environmental Stewardship

Session Outcomes

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- **Review the Concept Paper submission process.**



Concept Paper Submission

Concept Papers are submitted in eGrants.

Create an eGrants account:

<http://egrants.cns.gov> NOT grants.gov

- Click on: Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account.
- Click on: Create a Grantee Account
- Click on: This is my first time. I want to create a new account with eGrants

You will need the following information:

- EIN Number
- UEI Number (not required to create an account, but required to receive federal resources)
- Your organization's contact information
- Your contact information

The image displays two screenshots of the eGrants website interface. The top screenshot shows the 'LOGIN' page with fields for 'User Name' and 'Password', a 'Remember me' checkbox, and links for 'Forgot your password? Get help', 'Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account', and 'View system rules of behavior'. Below these links is a detailed disclaimer about system monitoring and a 'Login to eGrants' button. The bottom screenshot shows the 'BECOME A GRANT APPLICANT' page, which prompts the user to select an option: 'I have an eGrants account...' or 'This is my first time. I want to create a new account with eGrants...'. A link for 'Already have an eGrants account? Proceed to Login' is also visible.



AmeriCorps

eGrants

eGRANTS MESSAGES

Welcome Joy

Welcome to eGrants!

VIEW MY GRANTS/APPLICATIONS

→ View All

→ 1 Approved for Consideration/Funding

→ 7 Awarded

→ 2 Closed

→ 3 Concept Papers

→ 1 Under CNCS review

VIEW MY AMERICORPS PORTAL

→ Portal Home

Creating an Application

New →

Continuation/Renewal →

Amendment →

Concept Paper →

Managing My Account

Click on the links below to access common account functions.

My Account →

Reporting to CNCS

Financial Report →

Progress Report →

Progress Report Supplement →

Welcome Kelly

Start New Concept Paper

back

save

next

Start New

Applicant Info

Application Info

Narratives

Review

Authorize and Submit

Concept Paper Info

Concept Paper ID: [REDACTED]

NOFA: FY 2025 AmeriCorps
VISTA New Projects

Type: New

Status: Concept Paper Initial
Entry

Legal Applicant Info

[REDACTED]
250 E St NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20525

Application Info

Please enter the requested application information below.

Areas affected by the project (Max. 1000 chars) List Cities, Counties or States ?

Other

Are you a former grantee/sponsor?

If yes, for how many years? How many members/participants did you have?

Does your organization have other CNCS resources?

If yes, please explain. How many members/participants do you have?

Focus Areas and Objectives

Economic Opportunity

- ☐ Financial Literacy
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Find Opportunity
- ☐ Other Economic Opportunity
- ☐ Microenterprise
- ☐ Asset Building
- ☐ Community Economic Development

Education

Healthy Futures

Veterans and Military Families

Disaster Services

Environmental Stewardship

Other

back

save

next



AmeriCorps

eGrants

eGRANTS MESSAGES

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- ➔ 7 Awarded
- ➔ 2 Closed
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- ➔ 1 Under CNCS review

VIEW MY AMERICORPS PORTAL

- ➔ Portal Home

Creating an Application

- New ➔
- Continuation/Renewal ➔
- Amendment ➔
- Concept Paper ➔

Managing My Account

Click on the links below to access common account functions.

My Account ➔

Reporting to CNCS

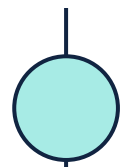
- Financial Report ➔
- Progress Report ➔
- Progress Report Supplement ➔

Executive Summary Template:

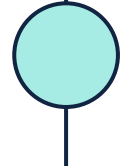
[**Organization Name**]'s mission is [**Mission Statement**]. The proposed VISTA project aligns with the [**Choose one or more AmeriCorps Focus Area**] focus area(s). The VISTA project will seek to [**enter goal(s)**] and expects to benefit [**enter type and estimated number of beneficiaries**]. [**Enter number of members**] members will contribute to the goals of the project by performing activities such as [**enter activities**] over the course of [**enter expected length of project**].

The background image shows a web application interface. On the left is a sidebar with a list of items: 'Welcome', 'Start', 'App', 'App', 'Narrative', 'Review', 'Auto', 'Concept', 'Concept', 'NOFA: VISTA', 'Type: M', 'Status:', and 'Entry'. The main content area on the right has a header with the word 'ants' and a 'next' button. Below the header is a list of items, each with a question mark icon and the text 'it entered'. The list items are: 'lit narrative', 'lit narrative', 'lit narrative', 'lit narrative', and 'lit narrative'.

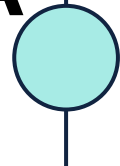
What makes an AmeriCorps VISTA Project- and application- successful?



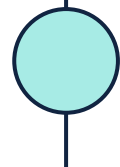
Clearly shows how the capacity building activities you are proposing directly ties into anti-poverty outcomes in the community you're serving



Includes deliberate engagement of your beneficiary population and communities



Is designed with the end in mind – when will your project become self-sustaining and how? With additional staff? Community volunteers? Partnerships with other organizations and agencies?



Focuses not only on the project activities but on the development of members. Members may be younger and in need of greater supervisor or they may be retired community members who can work on their own. As a project director and VISTA Project Supervisor, you will have to flex your skills to adapt to the people you recruit. It will be worth it in the end!

Timeline

AmeriCorps VISTA Request for Concept Papers Timeline	
Task	
Concept Papers	
Concept Paper decisions	April 2025
Application decisions	July 2025

Contacts and Resources

Contact Your Regional Office	AmeriCorps.gov/contact/region-offices
Request for Concept Papers webpage	AmeriCorps.gov/vistarfcg
Concept Paper Instructions	AmeriCorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/VISTA-Concept-Paper-Instructions.pdf
Sponsor a VISTA member	AmeriCorps.gov/partner/how-it-works/americorps-vista
FY25 Annual Program Guidance	AmeriCorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2024-09-FY25-AmeriCorps-VISTA-Annual-Guidance.pdf
eGrants	Egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp
AmeriCorps Hotline	1-800-942-2677; eGrants technical issues, option 3
System for Award Management (SAM)	SAM.gov

Learn More...



- [AmeriCorps VISTA Playlist](#)
- **Follow @AmeriCorpsVISTA:** Follow VISTA on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [X/Twitter](#) to stay in the loop of all program updates and hear stories from the field.

A group of approximately 15 AmeriCorps VISTA members posing for a photo. They are wearing blue and grey polo shirts with the AmeriCorps logo. They are standing in a room with large windows in the background.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE. CHOOSE AMERICORPS VISTA.
Join the next generation of community leaders.

AmeriCorps.gov/VISTA

The AmeriCorps logo, which features a stylized 'A' inside a circle, followed by the word "AmeriCorps" in a bold, sans-serif font.

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Thank you.

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